

Perfin quality: member feedback continues

The subject of perfins quality continues to draw feedback from members around the world. The dean of Czech perfins collectors, Vladimir Munzberger, has this to say about perfins—and the real reasons they are collectable

From the discussions about the quality of perfins and how to exhibit them I understand that every perfin collector knows what perfins are, but not everybody works with the same information when speaking about their quality and exhibiting. And this is the heart of two "flat" views on perfins: one thinking about perfins in the real sense of the words *perforated initials* without looking at their real role in postal traffic; the other one (opposite but very similar) views perfins as damaged stamps only. I hope that today both extremes exist only theoretically, but I still have a feeling that more explanation and more publication about perfins is necessary worldwide.

"From my opinion when speaking about the quality measurements or standards and when we are thinking about exhibiting perfins we must start from their role in postal traffic and philately in general. We know that in most countries perfins were standard practice and by postal or administrative authorities a permitted tool in postal traffic. Many stamp collectors (in a broad sense) realized this fact and that is why perfins slowly but constantly are growing in popularity, especially among non-perfins col-

lectors. It is clear that they use perfins in their collections in a bit different way than perfins collectors do.

"What is the top level material with perfins? It is an entire, really postally used document, bearing not only a perfined stamp or perfined itself (in the case of postal stationery) but also complete identification of the perfin user placed on this document. As the postal traffic was highly variable and abundant of many type of services, forms etc., it is important to study usage of perfins in all types of such services.

"This is more impor-

tant when we realise that almost every country has its own specialities in postal services. So when speaking about the quality of perfins and about exhibiting perfins we must have in mind the quality of complete documents with perfins.

"When we are speaking about the quality of single stamps with perfins, from my opinion we do not collect "holes", but complete perfined stamps. So when defining the top quality perfin, it is necessary to have the quality of the stamp in the first place and after that list

all important quality attributes of perfin itself. The first sentence of this paragraph also uniquely answers the question how to place the perfin to the exhibit—face down makes no sense, because in most cases it says nothing about the stamp. As advanced collectors look for perfins on better stamps the only possibility to show them is face up. Even more, by single stamps we can show the time of usage, various places and postmarks, with which the perfin was used. Any copy machine or scan would produce a high quality picture, which shows the important information from the back side, including the perfin pattern.

"I think that all the advice of Dr. Harvey Tilles presented in the *Bulletin* is very useful and if I understand well they are not far from what I have said above. It is clear that everybody can collect everything they want, but a different situation is to define standards or basic principles.

"As a consequence I think that one of the main tasks for perfin societies in various countries is to present perfins in their completeness and help to order perfins in the right place in the whole scheme of philately."

Chris Carr (#9L) e-mailed his comments on perfins quality from England.

"In reference to the article on the grading of perfins—in my perfins collections I only have undamaged stamps. I prefer stamps that have the complete perfin and I usually only buy such. However, I get quite a lot from non-perfin collectors by way of gift or trade and provided they are undamaged, they go into my collections until I get better copies.

"For me the preferred order is [a] complete perfin reading upright (or however it is normally punched) from the front; [b] as [a] but from the back; [c] with missing holes; and [d] split.

"Given a choice I will always take the earliest issued stamp. I prefer a small size rather than a large stamp but have no preference as to whether it is precancelled.

"Obviously I prefer a perfin to read from the front and to be complete but I completely disagree with Randall when he includes incomplete patterns as true defects to be included with torn, scuffed or stained stamps. Most incomplete perfins are as a result of usage and if the machine is not repaired, can continue with missing/broken pins for years. This could be postal history."